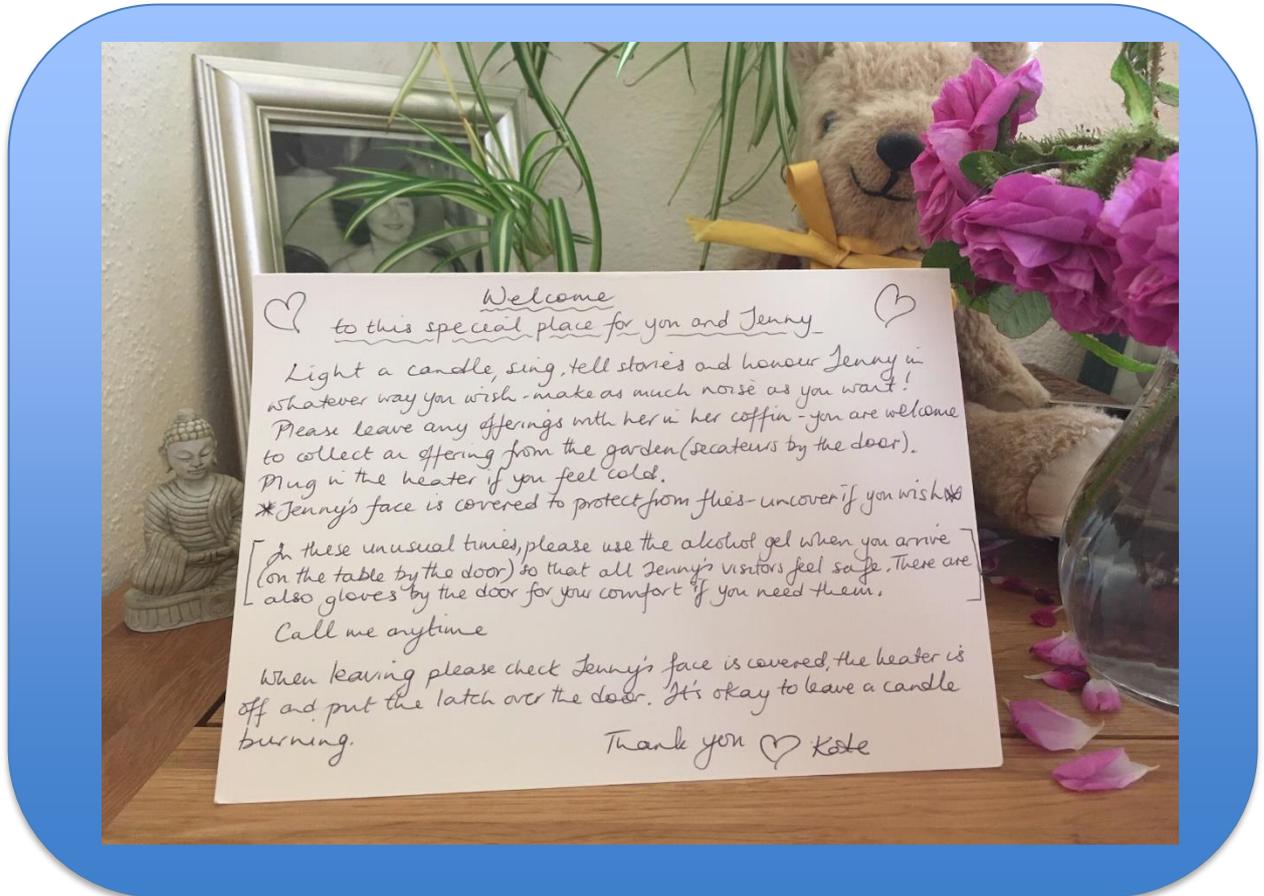


Looking After Someone at Home Who Has Died

Taking Account of Covid-19 Restrictions



At Pushing Up The Daisies we reach out to all who are facing the death of a loved one in this current challenging environment. We are ever mindful that people continue to die in our communities from other causes as well as from Covid-19, and that the dying process may be especially difficult for families due to physical distancing measures. *Spending time with someone after they die may be more important than ever to help console those grieving the death of their loved one and to allow them to say goodbye.*

www.pushingupthedaisies.org.uk

0300 102 4444

Pushing Up The Daisies is a Scottish charity SC046808


pushing up
the daisies
bringing death home

Specific advice has not been issued for people who want to care for a loved one at home who has died and so we provide the following short guidance based on several sources⁽¹⁾. If you wish to do this we are here to help you make arrangements. It is easier if someone dies at home but also possible if they die outside the home.

The main points to note are -

- 1) Our legal rights to care for and transport someone who has died without appointing a funeral director have not changed.
- 2) We need to meet the current physical distancing requirements exactly as we do at all other times in relation to safe distance, self-isolation and shielding extremely vulnerable people. Similarly for handwashing and PPE (personal protective equipment).
- 3) We need to take a few extra precautions against infection when caring for someone who has died with confirmed or presumed Covid-19 – see below.
- 4) There is no difference in funerals for someone with or without Covid-19. Any changes to funerals currently in place are to meet physical distancing rules and to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid-19 between mourners and to key workers.
- 5) Although funerals can go ahead, there are restrictions on the number of people who can attend – see below.
- 6) Visiting (viewing) the body of someone who has died at a funeral director's premises is still possible, again within physical distancing rules. Note: Funeral directors will have different requirements/restrictions depending on their premises.
- 7) The Scottish government [Guidance for Funeral Directors](#) published on 13th April 2020 states “ ...If approached, a funeral director should seek to safely fulfil the requests of any faith or cultural group for the deceased in their care.”
- 8) [Guidance on preparation for burial or cremation for religious organisations, faith and cultural groups](#) has also been published in Scotland.

⁽¹⁾ Note: This information is valid at 16th June 2020 for Scotland. It is applicable to other areas of the UK unless stated. The guidance in each country will change as time goes on. Sources for updates in each area of the UK are given at the end of this guidance.

Visiting someone at home who has died

We are not aware of any specific guidance about visiting someone at home who has died in Scotland, England or Wales. This is certainly possible at funeral directors' premises. If you would like to arrange this then please contact us. We can support you to make a plan. We recommend people follow the general guidance applicable at the time relating to physical distancing and mixing of households. Apart from the usual need to keep someone's body cool, you would basically need a space where the person who has died could lie at rest and a rota of visitors, so that visitors could come and go safely within the parameters of the current guidance. We recommend you also provide gloves and alcohol gel or handwashing facilities.

In Northern Ireland this is not recommended (June 2020) due to the different cultural tradition of holding wakes at home – see reference.

Extra Precautions against Infection if someone has died as a result of Covid-19

Any infection risk from someone who has died as a result of Covid-19 will primarily arise from contact with droplets and aerosols when handling and moving their body.

There is a small risk of expelling aerosols from the lungs of the person who has died eg on turning over. We suggest this is controlled by placing a fluid resistant surgical mask over their mouth and nose whilst they are being turned or moved. If this is not available then simply place a cloth soaked in soap over their mouth and nose (the virus has a lipid or fatty coating which is dissolved immediately by soap).

There is also a small risk of infection by touching their body or surroundings for up to 72 hours after their death. Whilst washing, dressing, touching or moving someone who has died the Government advice is to wear disposable gloves, apron and face mask and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol gel afterwards.

Public Health England advice is that body bags are not necessary where they would otherwise not be appropriate. Movement in a shroud, sheet or coffin is acceptable.

Attendance at Funerals

Recognising the potential long term health implications to bereaved families, funerals have always been permitted to go ahead, albeit with limits on the number of people attending. The number of attendees are limited to ten in NI and not specified in Scotland and England (June 2020). Those who can attend are

- members of the person's household,
- close family members,
- if the deceased has neither household or family members in attendance, then a modest number of close friends.

In Wales, the relationship is not specified – attendees must be invited, with numbers limited to meet physical distancing requirements at the specific location.

These limitations will change over time – please check the references below for the current situation.

Sources to check for detailed information and updates –

The source we most recommend for up-to-date information is the [National Association of Funeral Directors website](https://nafdcovid19.org.uk/advice-for-funeral-directors/latest-guidance-on-managing-the-deceased/) - particularly <https://nafdcovid19.org.uk/advice-for-funeral-directors/latest-guidance-on-managing-the-deceased/>

Guidance for Scotland is available at <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19> under Funerals, Burials and Cremations - particularly <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-funeral-services/>

Guidance for England is available at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> - particularly <https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/arrange-the-funeral>

Guidance for Wales is available at <https://gov.wales/coronavirus> - particularly <https://gov.wales/advice-bereaved-coronavirus-covid-19#section-43611>

Guidance for Northern Ireland is available at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-bereaved-about-funeral-arrangements>

Contact us on 0300 102 4444 if you would like to discuss your options.